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ABSTRACT

This annual report is designed to provide information about the New Options program and to highlight recent program initiatives and accomplishments. It begins by describing the program, which assists middle and senior high school students, postsecondary students, and adults in exploring job opportunities traditionally held by the opposite sex. The program's key goals are also summarized. The next sections list the following: some major contributions the projects make to the community, business, and the economy; services and assistance projects offer on an individual or small group basis; and examples of vocational-technical programs that can lead to nontraditional careers for females and males. Nontraditional students of the year are highlighted. The next section presents facts that are used by New Options project directors to illustrate what can be expected realistically after graduation. New Options program results highlight student recruitment, student retention, student placement, and tuition assistance. Program year 1993-94 demographics are then provided. The Career Directions: Mapping Out Your Future curriculum is described and results of a follow-up survey are summarized. Information is also provided on the field testing of the New Options Women in the Technologies and Trades draft curriculum. A list of ways in which the Pennsylvania Department of Education supports projects is followed by a source for more information and a list of 1994-95 projects. (YLB)

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NEW OPTIONS
Redefining Career Opportunities

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NEW OPTIONS
1993 ◆ 94

ANNUAL REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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A program designed to assist females and males in achieving success in careers which have traditionally been held by members of the opposite sex.

In short, New Options is about new and expanded job opportunities.

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New Options Provides New Opportunities

New Options is a program that assists middle and senior high school students, postsecondary students and adults in exploring job opportunities traditionally held by the opposite sex.

This program, sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education and supported by funding initiatives from the federal government, is designed to assist students and adults in determining if they are interested in nontraditional vocational studies and occupations.

Examples of nontraditional occupational areas for females include the skilled trades such as carpentry and masonry, technologies (i.e. electronic and mechanical design technology) and civil and mechanical engineering. Examples of nontraditional occupational areas for males include health care, office administration and day care.

The program is managed by a cadre of project directors who administer New Options projects throughout the Commonwealth. The primary responsibilities of these directors include:

- Identifying students and/or adults who are interested in pursuing nontraditional vocational studies and jobs.
- Assisting interested individuals in entering nontraditional vocational programs and courses of study.
- Providing support in a variety of ways ranging from one-to-one counseling, to referrals, to training and job placement.
- Developing relationships with the business community to help promote job development and placement in nontraditional occupations.

Hundreds of individuals — females and males — have been introduced to job opportunities they had not previously considered as a result of the New Options initiative.

"The New Options Program is not only supportive to students' needs, but also informs students of education and career opportunities available to them. I appreciate the tuition assistance provided to my daughter for her college education."

Parent

New Options Provides New Opportunities (cont'd)

The program's key goals are summarized in these three primary outcomes:

1. Assist students who are interested in nontraditional occupations to receive training and take courses that will prepare them for these occupations.

2. Provide a variety of support mechanisms ranging from information on financial assistance to personal support ensuring that students complete their necessary training and studies.

3. Assist individuals with job placement in nontraditional occupations.

A recent recipient of the *Nontraditional Vocational-Technical Education Students of the Year* award may have said it best . . . "The opportunity to enroll in a nontraditional program has allowed me to focus on a forward-moving, successful career."

New Options Makes A Difference

Unlike many programs, New Options projects benefit more than just the participants and recipients of the various services. Listed below are some of the major contributions these projects make to the community, business and the economy.

- Introduce individuals to new jobs and opportunities.
- Forge partnerships with the community and businesses.
- Assist in reducing unemployment.
- Decrease welfare rolls.
- Enhance individuals' self-esteem and sense of purpose.
- Provide qualified, motivated persons for the workforce.
- Provide opportunities for women to improve their earning potential.
- Contribute to improvements in equitable job placements.
- Introduce participants to technologies that are key to businesses.
- Expand the employment pool.
- Teach a five-week nontraditional pre-training program for returning adults.
- Facilitate a eight to ten hour career guidance program for middle school students.

In addition, New Options projects offer the following services and assistance on an individual or small group basis.

Nontraditional Career Awareness
Job Counseling for Nontraditional Occupations
Hands-On Training Opportunities
Support Groups
Financial Aid Information
Individual Nontraditional Career Planning
Job Placement Services
Training Placement

"As a New Options Director, I find it challenging, as well as fulfilling, to be working with students who are breaking barriers in the academic realm, as well as in nontraditional careers. The program offers students the opportunity to excel and achieve their life and career goals."

New Options Director

What Is A Nontraditional Job

To be considered a *nontraditional* job, at least 75.1 percent of the individuals in that field must be of the opposite sex. For example, if a woman is pursuing a career in a field where 75.1 percent or more of the individuals employed are male, it would be considered a nontraditional career.

Listed below are examples of vocational-technical programs which can lead to nontraditional careers.

Nontraditional Programs for Females

Agriculture

- Agriculture Mechanization
- Forestry

Trade and Industrial

- Engineering Fields (architectural, civil, mechanical, etc.)
- Robotics Technology
- Automotive Engineering Technology
- Law Enforcement/Police Science
- Electrician
- Plumber/Pipefitter
- Construction Trades
- Diesel Mechanic
- Mechanical Drafting
- Welding
- Aircraft Pilot
- Air Traffic Controller
- Mason/Tile Setter
- Communication System Installation/Repair
- Heating, Air Conditioning, Refrigeration
- Machinist
- Cabinet Maker/Millworker

Nontraditional Programs for Males

Business

- Office Supervision/Management
- Court Reporter
- Executive Assistant/Secretary

Health Occupations

- Dental Assistant/Hygienist
- Medical Records Technician
- Occupational Therapy Assistant
- Physical Therapy Assistant
- Medical Lab Technician
- Surgical Nursing
- Practical Nurse (LPN)
- Home Health Aide
- Medical Assistant

Marketing and Distribution

- Apparel/Access Marketing
- Fashion Merchandising

Occupational Home Economics

- Child Care/Guidance
- Child Care Provider
- Cloth/Textile Worker

Trade and Industrial

- Paralegal/Legal Assistant
- Library Assistant

Miscellaneous

- Pre-Elementary Teacher
- Individual/Family Development
- Social Work

"As an instructor, working with nontraditional students has been an enjoyable experience for me. These students have demonstrated a willingness to learn and achieve. They realize the strong commitment needed to overcome their hurdles as nontraditional students. I use these students as examples and leaders in my class. Over the last four years, I have noticed employers asking for and hiring nontraditional students because of their excitement and dependability. This program opens the doors for nontraditional students to enter high-skilled, good-paying jobs normally available only to certain groups or genders."

AVTS Instructor

Who Can Participate In New Options Projects

To be eligible for participation in a local New Options project, a person must fall into one of the five general groups listed below:

Female or male student in junior high/middle school,
Female or male student in senior high school,
Female or male student at a postsecondary institution,
Adult returning to school or vocational-technical training, or
Individual seeking a career change to a nontraditional field.

When dealing with adult populations, project directors give special consideration to working with economically disadvantaged individuals.

A listing of New Options project directors appears on page 18 of this report. If further assistance is required, contact the Sex Equity Administrator at the Bureau of Vocational-Technical Education at (717) 787-5293.

"The New Options Program has aided our teen parent program by providing guest speakers for our students, by hosting students on a field trip to the local community college and by receiving referrals for students planning to enroll in nontraditional programs."

Project Counselor

Nontraditional Students Of The Year

Several years ago, an awards program was designed and sponsored by the Pennsylvania Department of Education to recognize the achievements of students in vocational programs who are pursuing nontraditional careers.

Students who are eligible for the awards program must be graduating from a vocational-technical program that is considered nontraditional for their gender. The program is deemed nontraditional when 75.1 percent of the statewide enrollment in the program area are members of the opposite sex.

Students are recommended for consideration by their instructors. Those nominated students must then respond to a series of statements related to their experiences in nontraditional vocational-technical education. Based on instructor recommendation and the student's responses, regional and statewide winners are selected by a panel of judges and are recognized at a statewide honors luncheon. All nominees receive certificates of achievement from the Bureau of Vocational-Technical Education. Many of these students are also honored at the local level. The 1994 awardees are listed below.

1994 Pennsylvania Nontraditional Secondary Vocational-Technical Education Student of the Year

Dawn Davis, McKeesport Area Vocational Technical School, Automotive Technology

Being recognized as a nontraditional role model in my high school has instilled in me a responsibility to my chosen field.

Dawn Davis

Secondary Central Regional Winner

Autumn Schoonover, Keystone Central Area Vocational Technical School, Plumbing

Entering a nontraditional trade has meant a great deal to me. It has changed my life, in fact I've learned to deal with difficult situations.

Secondary Eastern Regional Winner

Tamra Roper, West Side Area Vocational Technical School, Electrical Occupations

My ultimate career goal is to become an engineer, I know I can find a good job and make a contribution in this field.

1994 Pennsylvania Nontraditional Returning Adult Vocational-Technical Education Student of the Year

Trudy Johnson, Connelley Technical Institute and Adult Education Center, Carpentry

I can enjoy a sense of pride knowing that I have the knowledge and skills to accomplish my dream of one day owning my own business.

Trudy Johnson

Returning Adult Central Regional Winner

Marcella Brown, Altoona Area Vocational Technical School, Mechanical Drafting and Design

It is rewarding to know that I am contributing to technology for the future.

Returning Adult Eastern Regional Winner

Sandra Holsinger, Lancaster County Area Vocational Technical School, Drafting

I look at technical drawing as a door to the future with broader opportunities to explore.

1994 Pennsylvania Nontraditional Postsecondary Vocational-Technical Education Student of the Year

Janet Marie Dietz, Community College of Allegheny County, Architectural Drafting/Design Technology

With hard work and determination I was able to redirect my life and acquire not only my goals but also my dreams.

Janet Marie Dietz

Postsecondary Central Regional Winner

Joan Lowe, Pennsylvania College of Technology, Electrical Occupations

I knew college wouldn't be easy, and now my goal is to own or be a partner in a business.

Postsecondary Eastern Regional Winner

Stephen Strauss, Schuylkill Training and Technology Center, Practical Nursing

Before entering the nursing program I was frustrated and confused as to what I wanted to do with my life.

Student Perceptions Of Life After Graduation

Students preparing to enter the workforce often have misconceptions about what life is really like among the working class. To combat these misconceptions, the following facts are used by New Options project directors to illustrate, realistically, what can be expected.

- By the year 2000, 80 percent of all jobs will require vocational-technical training while only 20 percent of all jobs will require a college degree.
- Approximately four out of five jobs will be in service industries such as business, personnel, legal, education, social or health services.
- The average 16-year-old male worker can expect to spend about 40 years in the labor force, while the average 16-year-old female worker can expect to spend about 30 years in the workforce.
- The fastest-growing and better-paying service occupations will be those that require the most educational preparation.
- About 60 percent of women work because of economic need.
- The average woman earns 75 cents for every dollar earned by the average man when both work year round and full time.
- About 67 percent of women who are in the labor force have children under the age of 18.
- Today, nine out of ten female high school students can expect to work at some time in their lives.
- A person needs at least two years of high school math, beginning with one year of algebra, to work as a machinist, electrician, data processor, dental or medical assistant, police officer, bank teller or drafter.

US Department of Labor
Women's Bureau, 1993

"As we enter a new era, one characterized by diversity in the workplace, New Options is a catalyst for change as well as an integral support service for managing change. The New Options program provides essential and timely services and has made a significant difference in the lives of our students."

AVTS Director

New Options Program Results

In 1993-94, there were 28 full-time and part-time New Options projects funded by the state Department of Education and the federal government. These programs worked with 2,025 students at secondary area vocational technical schools, community colleges and universities with vocational-technical training programs.

A variety of equity-related services are provided by the New Options project directors. These include: nontraditional vocational career guidance and assessments, prevocational hands-on experiences, field trips, job shadowing, peer support groups, employability and job coping skills sessions, job fairs and interaction with nontraditional students and career role models. Most students who actively participate in the programs receive 10 or more hours of individual and/or group services.

The New Options program results from the activities and services provided by project directors are listed below.

Student Recruitment

517 secondary, postsecondary and returning adult (to an area vocational technical school) students were recruited into approved vocational-technical programs considered nontraditional to their gender.

- 70 percent or more of these students identified at least three nontraditional occupations related to their interests and abilities.
- All students completed individualized career plans which assisted them in mapping out strategies to complete their academic/ vocational-technical training and find employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

Student Retention

873 secondary and postsecondary students chose to continue with their nontraditional studies and training.

- 70 percent or more of these students completed all assigned classes for the 1993-94 school year.
- 70 percent or more of the postsecondary or returning adult students maintained a 2.0 or higher GPA (grade point average).

Student Placement

1994 New Options Graduates

314 secondary, postsecondary and returning adult students graduated in nontraditional vocational-technical programs. During the 1994-95 program year, project directors will provide support placement services to these graduates. Within one year:

- 90 percent of the secondary graduates will find employment, acquire additional vocational-technical training/education or enter the military.
- 80 percent of the postsecondary/returning adult graduates will be employed in their chosen nontraditional occupations, acquire additional training/education related to their nontraditional training program or enter the military.

1992-93 New Options Graduates

321 secondary, postsecondary and returning adult students, who graduated in nontraditional vocational-technical programs during the 1992-93 school year, received placement services during 1993-94. Of these:

- 98 percent of the secondary 1992-93 graduates were placed into nontraditional employment, enrolled in additional training/ education programs or entered the military.
- 83 percent of the postsecondary/returning adult 1992-93 graduates were placed into nontraditional employment or additional training/education related to their completed nontraditional vocational studies or entered the military.

Tuition Assistance

Approximately 361 students benefitted from the New Options program tuition assistance, which prioritized those students demonstrating greatest financial need. These funds can also be used to buy textbooks, uniforms, tools, etc. that are required to complete the training program. The US Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines were used to document their needs.

"The transition of New Options students to full-time employees has been easy due to the nature of their training and to the on-site visits held at our company. This is a mutually beneficial program for both parties and particularly for us in that it provides skilled employees that fit into our Affirmative Action Program, in the area of females and minorities."

Human Resource Director

New Options Program 1993-94 Demographics

Number of Students Served

Number of Students Recruited	517	(26%)
Number of Students Retained	873	(43%)
Number of Students Who Received Support Placement Services	321	(16%)
Number of 1994 New Options Graduates	314	(15%)
	2,025	

Gender Enrollments

Number of Female Participants	1,494	(74%)
Number of Male Participants	531	(26%)
	2,025	

Educational Levels

Number of Secondary Students	930	(46%)
Number of Postsecondary and Returning Adult Students	1,095	(54%)
	2,025	

Racial/Ethnic Groups

American Indian	16	(1%)
Asian	19	(1%)
Black	334	(16%)
Hispanic	75	(4%)
White	1,521	(75%)
Other	20	(1%)
No Response	40	(2%)
	2,025	

Financial Assistance

Number of Students Who Received Financial Aid	361	(18%)
Number of Students Who Received Financial Aid Who Demonstrated Greatest Financial Need	279	(77% of 361)

Students Served Since 1991

1991	1,323	1993	1,850
1992	1,498	1994	2,025

Career Directions: Mapping Out Your Future

Experience has shown that the best time to introduce children to the possibilities of working in nontraditional jobs is when they are young. That is why the *Career Directions: Mapping Out Your Future* curriculum was developed. This is a model curriculum for use by guidance counselors and teachers with middle school students. Originally, the curriculum was field tested in 19 school districts throughout Pennsylvania. Now it is a part of the New Options program.

The curriculum is designed to help adolescents become aware of careers they probably would not have considered because they are perceived as jobs suitable only for the opposite sex.

Career Directions is designed to:

- Expand how students look at themselves;
- Help students identify their interests, work values and experiences;
- Review strategies that help to reduce the prejudices and stereotyping associated with the belief that certain jobs are only for males and certain jobs are only for females; and
- Explore a wide range of career options, including nontraditional careers.

This model curriculum continues to receive high marks from students, teachers and guidance counselors. During the summer of 1994, a follow-up survey was mailed to schools who had requested copies of the curriculum. Initial returns indicate that educators have used it in various ways. Some presented the entire curriculum while others integrated individual lessons into their established career guidance programs.

Specifically, students were asked a series of questions prior to the start of the curriculum and then asked the same questions upon completion. Without exception, the students showed an increased awareness, understanding and interest in nontraditional education and careers. Many of these students indicated they would consider attending a vocational technical school **and** enrolling in a nontraditional vocational-technical program after they participated in the *Career Directions* curriculum. Most importantly, the exposure of students to this curriculum has impacted on how they perceive nontraditional jobs.

"As a result of the Career Directions guidance program that our current ninth graders were exposed to last school year, all but five of the 131 ninth graders were able to articulate some career or educational goal. The program has been beneficial in helping students set goals, consider vocational education and examine careers."

High School Guidance Counselor

Women In The Technologies And Trades

The Bureau of Labor Statistics, US Department of Labor, has found that nearly two-thirds of all minimum wage earners are women. In fact, women earning minimum wages can work a week and still earn less than many male workers do in a day. These statistics point to the increasing "feminization of poverty." Nearly 65 percent of households with children headed by women are considered to be living below the poverty level.

To combat this increasing problem, Pennsylvania's New Options and New Choices[1] programs jointly sponsored a pilot program to develop and field test a nontraditional vocational-technical pretraining or training-enhancement curriculum known as Project WITT. Use of this model curriculum should provide women with further avenues for improving their vocational and financial standings.

Through a competitive process, Tradeswomen in Philadelphia/Women in Nontraditional Work, Inc. (TOP/WIN) was chosen to design and implement the primary components of Project WITT. Following their initial testing, concepts from the pilot program were infused into a 75-hour *New Options Women in the Technologies and Trades* (WITT) draft curriculum. Lessons were developed around four objectives: self-development, including physical conditioning; math and science; blueprint reading and nontraditional vocational career exploration.

During 1993-94, four New Options projects fieldtested the 75-hour draft curriculum. Forty women interested in nontraditional occupations volunteered to participate in the field study. At the end of the four week course, evaluations from the women and project directors indicated that New Options WITT had accomplished positive objectives to include:

- Understanding the many options available in the increasing technological and skilled-trades occupations;
- Increasing physical stamina through power walking;
- Upgrading math, science and blueprint reading skills; and
- Developing strategies to combat the internal and external barriers surrounding nontraditional occupations for women.

[1] New Choices is a program designed to assist single parents and displaced homemakers in preparing to re-enter the workforce

The *Women in the Technologies and Trades* curriculum is now an integral part of all New Options projects in Pennsylvania. The projects will annually implement at least one cycle of the 75-hour curriculum. In addition, 70 percent of the women who complete this prevocational training program will enroll in nontraditional vocational-technical training programs or apprenticeships that lead to economic self-sufficiency for each.

"The WITT program answered questions for me that I didn't even know I had. It's really helped me a lot. I see avenues opening for me that I probably would never even have considered before. I would definitely recommend that other women take a program like WITT. I really, really hope and pray that the WITT program will be continued in the future so that more women can have encouragement to get into a nontraditional field."

Student

Statewide Support Helps New Options Program

The New Options program is managed by the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) on a statewide level for operation at local education agencies in many communities. It is the responsibility of the PDE to ensure that quality projects are funded for two-year intervals. In order to support the most innovative and well-designed projects, the PDE has developed a competitive grant process to review submissions for the New Options initiative.

PDE is committed to supporting local New Options projects in a variety of ways.

- Developed *Career Directions: Mapping Out Your Future*, a middle school curriculum to introduce students to nontraditional jobs.
- Developed *New Options Women in the Technologies and Trades (WITT)*, a 75-hour prevocational training curriculum to increase the enrollment of women into approved nontraditional vocational-technical training programs.
- Developed *Surviving and Thriving in a Nontraditional Skilled Trade*, a handbook for women entering the skilled trades.
- Provide inservice training for project directors.
- Provide an Operations Manual to assist project directors with project design and management.
- Provide ideas for marketing the program and recruiting students.
- Fund and manage a series of pilot projects to further enhance the New Options program.
- Ensure accountability to the program objectives and outcomes and to the program standards which show in concrete terms that some type of change has been realized or a numerical goal has been met.

For More Information

about the New Options program or any information mentioned in this annual report, or for additional copies of this annual report, please contact a local New Options project director, or call:

Jane M. Acri
Sex Equity State Administrator
Pennsylvania Department of Education
(717) 787-5293
TDD (717) 783-8445

PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
1994-95 NEW OPTIONS PROJECTS

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Altoona AVTS	Kathleen Eberhardt	814-946-8468
Arin Intermediate Unit	Dorothy Kuzneski	412-463-5300
Berks County AVTS	Joyce Duvall	610-374-4073
California University of PA	Lisa Hartley	412-938-5883
Carlow College	Ellen McDevitt	412-578-6683
Central Intermediate Unit	Debra Burrows/Christine Jawork	814-359-2793
Community College of Allegheny County	Suzanne Rabosky	412-237-3069
Community College of Allegheny County-North	Sandra Hayden	412-369-3661
Community College of Philadelphia	Arlene Reynolds	215-751-8934
Erie County AVTS	Stephanie Borsukoff/Neala Ferralli	814-868-0837
Forbes Road East AVTS	Hope Balanti	412-373-8100
Harrisburg Area Community College	Barbara Achtermann	717-780-2652
Lancaster County AVTS	TBA	717-464-2771
Luzerne County Community College	Joan Bush	717-829-7457
Middle Bucks County AVTS	Francine Perrine-Wittkamp	215-343-2480
Midwestern Intermediate Unit	Joyce Holzhauser	412-652-7215
Northampton County Community College	Diane Smith	610-861-5350
Pennsylvania College of Technology	Lawrence Emery	717-326-3761
Penn State McKeesport Campus	Catherine Behun	412-675-9065
Penn State Schuylkill Campus	Patricia Miller	717-385-6104
Riverview Intermediate Unit	TBA	814-226-7103
Steel Center AVTS	Lori Warabow	412-469-3200

NEW OPTIONS

9/94

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